

AN ACT concerning people living in poverty.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Commission on the Elimination of Poverty Act.

Section 5. Legislative Findings. It is the goal of the State of Illinois that all people be free from poverty.

The preamble to the Constitution of the State of Illinois states that the elimination of poverty and inequality are among the core goals of our State government. The Illinois Human Rights Act states that the public policy of the State of Illinois is "to promote the public health, welfare and safety by protecting the interest of all people in Illinois in maintaining personal dignity, in realizing their full productive capacities, and in furthering their interests, rights and privileges as citizens of this State". The State of Illinois is a party to all international human rights treaties signed and ratified by the United States.

Illinois is one of the wealthiest states in the United States, yet it has one of the highest rates of poverty and extreme poverty in the Midwest. The poverty level in 2007 was \$20,620 or less per year for a family of 4 and \$10,310 or less per year for a family of 4 in extreme poverty. In 2006 just

under 1,400,000 people residing in Illinois were living in poverty and over 687,000 people residing in Illinois were living in extreme poverty. There are people living in extreme poverty in every Illinois county.

Full participation in civic life cannot be achieved without those things that protect and preserve human dignity and make for a healthy life, including adequate nutrition and housing, meaningful work, safe communities, health care, and education.

Illinois has no comprehensive plan for the elimination of poverty.

Section 10. Commission on the Elimination of Poverty. The Commission on the Elimination of Poverty is created. The purpose of the Commission is to comprehensively address poverty in Illinois consistent with international human rights standards. The initial goal of the Commission is to develop a poverty elimination strategic plan to reduce extreme poverty in Illinois by 50% or more by 2015. In developing the overall strategic plan, and in working toward the goal of reducing extreme poverty in Illinois by at least 50% by 2015, the Commission shall address, at a minimum, all of the following:

- (1) Access to safe, decent and affordable housing.
- (2) Access to adequate food and nutrition.
- (3) Access to affordable and quality health care.
- (4) Equal access to quality education and training.
- (5) Dependable and affordable transportation.

(6) Access to quality and affordable child care.

(7) Opportunities to engage in meaningful and sustainable work that pays a living wage.

(8) The availability of adequate income supports.

The strategic plan shall include specific policy and fiscal recommendations and a timeline for each stage of implementation for each recommendation. For each recommendation, the Commission shall identify in measurable terms the actual or potential impact. The Commission may review and may make comments and recommendations on existing or proposed programs, policies, administrative rules, and statutes that have an impact on poverty in Illinois and, in particular, people living in extreme poverty.

Section 15. Members. The Commission on the Elimination of Poverty shall be composed of no more than 26 voting members including 2 members of the Illinois House of Representatives, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one appointed by the House Minority Leader; 2 members of the Illinois Senate, one appointed by the Senate President and one appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; one representative of the Office of the Governor appointed by the Governor; one representative of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor appointed by the Lieutenant Governor; and 20 public members, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the House Minority

Leader, 4 of whom shall be appointed by the Senate President, and 4 of whom shall be appointed by the Senate Minority Leader. It shall be determined by lot who will appoint which public members of the Commission. The public members shall include a representative of a service-based human rights organization; 2 representatives from anti-poverty organizations, including one that focuses on rural poverty; 2 individuals who have experienced extreme poverty; a representative of an organization that advocates for health care access, affordability and availability; a representative of an organization that advocates for persons with mental illness; a representative of an organization that advocates for children and youth; a representative of an organization that advocates for quality and equality in education; a representative of an organization that advocates for people who are homeless; a representative of a statewide anti-hunger organization; a person with a disability; a representative of an organization that advocates for persons with disabilities; a representative of an organization that advocates for immigrants; a representative of a statewide faith-based organization that provides direct social services in Illinois; a representative of an organization that advocates for economic security for women; a representative of an organization that advocates for older adults; a representative of a labor organization that represents primarily low and middle-income wage earners; a representative of a municipal or county government; and a

representative of township government. The appointed members shall reflect the racial, gender, and geographic diversity of the State and shall include representation from regions of the State experiencing the highest rates of extreme poverty.

The following officials shall serve as ex-officio members: the Secretary of Human Services or his or her designee; the Director of Corrections or his or her designee; the Director of Healthcare and Family Services or his or her designee; the Director of Human Rights or his or her designee; the Director of Children and Family Services or his or her designee; the Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity or his or her designee; the State Superintendent of Education or his or her designee; the Director of Aging or his or her designee; the Director of Public Health or his or her designee; and the Director of Employment Security or his or her designee. The State Workforce Investment Board, the African-American Family Commission, and the Latino Family Commission shall each designate a liaison to serve ex-officio on the Commission.

Members shall serve without compensation, but, subject to the availability of funds, public members may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary travel expenses connected to Commission business.

Commission members shall be appointed within 60 days after the effective date of this Act. The Commission shall hold its initial meeting within 30 days after at least 50% of the members have been appointed.

The representative of the Office of the Governor and the representative of a service-based human rights organization shall serve as co-chairs of the Commission.

At the first meeting of the Commission, the members shall select a 7-person Steering Committee that includes the co-chairs.

The Commission may establish committees that address specific issues or populations and may appoint individuals with relevant expertise who are not appointed members of the Commission to serve on committees as needed.

Under the leadership of the Office of the Governor, subject to appropriation, the Department of Human Services shall provide administrative support to the Commission.

Section 20. Meetings; reports. The full Commission shall meet at least annually. The Steering Committee shall meet at least quarterly. In addition, it may hold up to 4 public hearings to assist in the development of the strategic plan. The Commission shall also consider written comments for the purpose of developing the strategic plan.

The Commission shall issue an interim report on its activities and recommendations to the constitutional officers and to the General Assembly on or before March 1, 2009. The strategic plan shall be adopted by the Commission not later than January 1, 2010 and sent to the constitutional officers and to the General Assembly. Following the adoption of the

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strategic plan, the Commission shall continue to meet and issue annual reports by March 1st of each year on the implementation of the strategic plan.

The Commission shall hold at least one public hearing prior to the issuance of each annual report.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.